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# ITALY -- POLITICAL TRENDS

ANNCR:

THE RECENT ITALIAN MUNICIPAL ELECTIONS CONTINUE TO PROVIDE MATERIAL FOR COMMENT BY POLITICAL ANALYSTS. VOA'S JULIAN GORSKI HAS THESE OBSERVATIONS.

VOICE:

THERE SEEMS TO BE LITTLE DOUBT THAT THE MURDER OF CHRISTIAN DEMOCRATIC LEADER ALDO MORO BY THE RED BRIGADES MARXIST TERRORISTS ONLY DAYS BEFORE THE ITALIAN MUNICIPAL ELECTIONS PLAYED A VITAL PART IN THE OUTCOME OF THE BALLOT. IT IS MORE DIFFICULT HOWEVER, TO GAUGE THE PRECISE MOTIVATIONS OF ITALIAN VOTERS.

THE COMMUNISTS LOST SOME STRENGTH IN THE ELECTIONS ... THE CHRISTIAN DEMOCRATS, GAINED, AS DID THE SOCIALISTS. THOSE ARE FACTS. IT IS ALSO A FACT THAT THE COMMUNIST SETBACK WAS THE FIRST SIGNIFICANT DECLINE IN THE PARTY'S VOTING STRENGTH IN 30 YEARS. HOWEVER, LESS THAN TEN PERCENT OF THE ELECTORATE WAS INVOLVED IN THE VOTING. AND THE ELECTION WAS HELD ONLY IN RELATIVELY SMALL LOCALITIES SCATTERED THROUGHOUT THE COUNTRY. THE LARGE CITIES -- THE MAINSTAY OF COMMUNIST POWER -- WERE OUT OF THIS YEAR'S BALLOT.

THE INTERRELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE MORO MURDER BY THE RED BRIGADES AND THE ATTITUDE OF ITALIAN VOTERS TOWARD MAIN-LINE COMMUNISTS HAS RECEIVED INORDINATE ATTENTION BY POLITICAL OBSERVERS. THE RED BRIGADES DENOUNCED THE COMMUNISTS FOR SUPPORTING CHRISTIAN DEMOCRATS IN GOVERNMENT. THE ITALIAN COMMUNIST PARTY ALSO INCURRED THE WRATH OF THE RED BRIGADES FOR SIDING WITH THE CHRISTIAN DEMOCRATS IN REFUSING TO KNUCKLE

DOWN TO THE TERRORIST CONDITIONS FOR THE RELEASE OF THE KIDNAPPED POLITICIAN. BUT IN DOING SO, THE RED BRIGADES OPENLY ACKNOWLEDGED ITS ALLEGIANCE TO THE COMMUNIST MOVEMENT.

THIS, ACCORDING TO MANY OBSERVERS, IS WHY SO MANY VOTERS TURNED AWAY FROM ITALIAN COMMUNIST PARTY CANDIDATES. MANY VOTERS., THEY SPECULATE, MAY HAVE BECOME CONCERNED OVER THE ULTIMATE GOALS OF THE COMMUNISTS WHO -- LIKE THE RED BRIGADES TERRORISTS -- HAVE INVARIABLY RESORTED TO VIOLENCE ONCE SECURE IN A POSITION OF POWER.

ITALY'S NEXT GENERAL ELECTION IS EXPECTED TO BE HELD NEXT SPRING. BY THAT TIME THE TRAUMA OF ALDO MORO'S DEATH SHOULD HAVE SUBSIDED CONSIDERABLY, AND AS POLITICAL OBSERVERS NOTE, THE PROBLEM OF THE RED BRIGADES MAY HAVE BEEN SOLVED. IN ANY CASE, DEVELOPMENTS ON THE ITALIAN POLITICAL SCENE WILL BE CLOSELY WATCHED. THE QUESTION NOW IS WHETHER ECONOMIC PROBLEMS WILL PERSUADE ITALIAN VOTERS TO ENDORSE THE CONTINUED COOPERATION BETWEEN THE CHRISTIAN DEMOCRATS AND THE COMMUNISTS. OR, WILL ITALY RETURN TO A CHRISTIAN DEMOCRATIC-SOCIALIST COALITION?

JS/PY